

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE POLICY
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, which will bar the collection of co-payments from veterans for hospital and nursing home care if the veteran is considered catastrophically disabled. I strongly advocate a noninterventionist foreign policy that would result in far fewer wars and, thankfully, far fewer catastrophically disabled veterans. But I also strongly believe that we must take care of those veterans who have been so severely wounded or otherwise disabled. Too often those who are most vocal in support of foreign military action are most silent when it comes time to take care of those who have paid a very high price for these actions. This legislation will provide at least a little relief to the most seriously injured veterans.

I am concerned, however, that this bill incorporates language from H.R. 6114, which rescinds a current law requirement that the VA obtain a signed consent form from a veteran before conducting an HIV test. We have seen veterans punished severely for attempting to avoid the required but controversial myriad of inoculations they are required to receive. Now we see that they will have less control over what medical tests to which they might be subjected. I am concerned over this loss of control over one's healthcare decisions among those who voluntarily join the military, and I urge the adoption of a more flexible policy. I would also urge my colleagues and the American people to contemplate this deprivation of medical and privacy rights on a massive scale should we ever reinstate the draft. I believe taking care of veterans should include both providing promised benefits and protecting their privacy rights.

INTRODUCING THE "PROHIBITING
THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S
SECRET RULE ACT"

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to stop the Department of Labor from proceeding with a new proposed rule that would seriously undermine the ability of the Federal Government to protect workers' health. The Department's proposal is the product of a flawed, politicized process.

On July 7, 2008, the Department of Labor submitted a proposed regulation entitled "Requirements for DOL Agencies' Assessment of Occupational Health Risks" to the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, for E.O. 12866 regulatory review.

This proposal is being made in contravention of a number of rules and processes. No notice of this rule was published in the semi-annual Regulatory Agenda as required under Executive Order 12866. Furthermore, unlike all other DOL regulatory submissions to OMB,

the information provided on the OMB Web site did not originally contain the rule's abstract, legal authority, timetable, agency contact, and other information required by the Executive Order. Although the intent is to finalize this rule before the end of the Bush administration, this submission violated the White House's own directive prohibiting submission of new regulations to OMB after June 1 except in "extraordinary circumstances."

What are the "extraordinary circumstances" that are being used to rush through this last minute, secret regulation on a subject as arcane and technical as "risk assessment?" Assessing risk is the backbone of any OSHA or MSHA standard that addresses hazards posed by chemicals or other health hazards. Changing the assumptions underlying risk assessment to those favored by industry can seriously erode the effectiveness of all future OSHA or MSHA standards far beyond the life of this administration.

The Department claims that this proposal was not published in the most recent regulatory agenda because when the last regulatory agenda was issued, they had not yet decided whether they would issue a proposal. But the Washington Post has revealed that they have been working on this regulation as far back as September 2007, when they paid \$349,000 to outside consultants to conduct a study of the risk-assessment process.

The entire proposal appears to have been designed and originated by political appointees at the Department of Labor, bypassing the real experts at OSHA and MSHA. According to the Washington Post, when a draft was finally shown to health scientists in MSHA and OSHA, they objected to both the legality and substance of the proposal and suggested that the proposal not be issued. The political appointees at the Department went ahead anyway.

In the last 7½ years, the Department has only managed to issue one health standard—and that was done under court order. It has failed to meet its own deadlines on regulations to protect workers against the health effects of silica, against the health effects of beryllium, or against the serious health effects of diacetyl, which causes popcorn lung.

Yet, suddenly, the Department of Labor has decided that further weakening the ability of OSHA or MSHA to issue any future health standards has become its highest priority.

No one is arguing that OSHA or MSHA do not need guidance for risk assessment. But the Department of Labor already has such guidance. This new regulation, however, which clearly has the potential to weaken worker protections, will be codified, binding all future administrations. Other agencies that have such guidance, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, note that "because the science of risk assessment continues to develop rapidly . . . risk assessments will be modified to use different approaches if appropriate."

The new Labor regulation, on the other hand, would add an entire additional layer of review to the already overstressed regulatory process by requiring notice and comments for all risk-related studies before a proposal can be issued. This would be in addition to numerous economic reviews, small business reviews, OMB reviews, public comments and public hearings that are already required before a standard is issued.

This Congress will not stand for further weakening of worker protections, particularly when it's done secretly—as this administration heads out of town. This bill would forbid the Department of Labor from issuing, administering or enforcing any rule, regulation, or requirement derived from the proposal submitted to the Office of Management and Budget. The Department's proposal is the product of a flawed, politicized process that has failed to properly consider the views of experts or the consequences for workplace health.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PILOT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Pilot Mountain State Park in Surry County, North Carolina.

Pilot Mountain rises above the North Carolina Piedmont to a height of 2,421 feet and has been a local landmark since the first settlers came to the region. It's been said that climbers can see more than 3,000 square miles of beautiful North Carolina country from the peak when skies are clear.

The mountain received the name Pilot Mountain in 1753 and the State of North Carolina designated the mountain a State park in 1968. Before becoming North Carolina's 14th State park, it was privately owned and changed hands many times.

Pilot Mountain is a distinctive and beautiful piece of North Carolina's natural heritage. Its peak, a bald crop of quartzite, stands in stark contrast to the farmland and wooded areas that surround it.

According to local lore, the Saura Indian tribe employed the mountain as a very intuitive guide to the outlying lands and it is their use of the mountain that may have contributed to its eventual naming.

Today the Pilot Mountain State Park takes in more than 3,600 acres and attracts more than 400,000 visitors a year. It is undoubtedly one of North Carolina's greatest natural treasures and I join the county and State in celebrating 40 years of conservation and public enjoyment of this wonderful State park.

CONGRATULATING BUSKEN
BAKERY

HON. JEAN SCHMIDT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Busken Bakery on their 80th birthday. Busken Bakery is truly an American success story. From humble beginnings, Busken's has grown into a Cincinnati institution through hard work, innovation, and a commitment to the local community.

Joseph and Daisie Busken began their business in 1928, opening their first bakery in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Cincinnati. Their goals were modest. According to Busken's